



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

RICHARD FORREST AND HIS TIMES, 1795-1830.

By MRS. KATE KEARNEY HENRY.

(Read before the Society, February 4, 1901.)

As reminiscences of the early days of Washington are being called for by the Columbia Historical Society, a few from the writer, as told her by her parents, may not be out of place.

Both my father's and my mother's family, the Kearneys and Forrests, were resident property owners here before the year 1800. My grandfather, John Kearney, an Irishman by birth and an architect by profession, came to this country about 1798, with his wife and three young sons. He bought lots in various localities in this city, and in the first number of the *National Intelligencer*, published in 1800, is an advertisement of his offering lots for sale. He built a handsome, three-story, double, brick residence at the southwest corner of Fourteenth and F Streets, in the same year. Being employed to draw the plans for the Custom House in Charleston, S. C., and going to superintend its building, he died there in 1803. His family continued to live in their Washington home until their marriages and deaths.

His three sons entered the service of the United States. James Kearney was a colonel in the Engineer Corps of the Army, and died in this city in 1861. Robert S. Kearney, a surgeon in the navy, died at sea. John A. Kearney, my father, also a fleet surgeon in the United States Navy, died in Mexico.

The Messrs. Joseph C. and Henry A. Willard pur-

chased the Kearney property about 1858. It is the portion of ground now covered by the old part of Wilard's Hotel.

My maternal grandfather, Richard Forrest, was the son of Captain Zachariah Forrest, of St. Mary's County, Md., of the Continental Army, whose brother, Uriah, was a colonel and brevet brigadier general in the Maryland Line. At an early age Richard Forrest was sent to France to be educated. On his return to America in 1787, he married Sarah Craufurd, a daughter of David Craufurd, of Upper Marlboro'. They moved to Georgetown, where Mr. Forrest was made postmaster in April, 1797, by Washington, and continued in office until February, 1799. His uncle, General Uriah Forrest, had purchased, in 1788, a large tract of land above Georgetown, which he called *Rosedale*, after the family estate of the Forrests in England. At that time it embraced the St. Alban tract, Mt. Pisgah, since called Beauvoir, the former residence of Dr. Samuel Busey, *Weston*, the late James Causton's home and *Greenwood*, the home of General Forrest's brother-in-law, Thomas Plater; it extended to the boundary of Georgetown, the whole tract being known as *Pretty Prospect*.

General Forrest was born in St. Mary's County, Maryland, in 1736. He was a delegate from Maryland to the Continental Congress in 1786 and '87, and again in '93 and '94, when, at the expiration of his term, he declined renomination.

When the District of Columbia was ceded to the United States by the States of Maryland and Virginia, *Rosedale* was then a part of Montgomery County, and the Forrests became literally one of the first families in the District. General Forrest was the first clerk of the United States District Court. His office was in one of the houses known as the "Round Tops," midway be-

tween the "six buildings" and Rock Creek. Just after the war General Forrest was sent on a secret mission to Germany. On his return he presented his accounts to the Government, saying, "I am a rich man and the Government is poor; I will not accept any pay for my services, but I will keep the account and some day the Government will be rich and my family may become poor and then can be paid what is due me." The first part of his prediction came true, but I am sorry to add, although several applications to Congress have been made by the family, the debt is still uncanceled.

General Forrest lost a leg at the battle of Brandywine, and was severely wounded at Germantown, where he was aide to Washington. Nevertheless he married, after the war, Rebecca, the beautiful daughter of Governor George Plater, of Maryland. It is a family tradition that General Washington selected the site for the house at Rosedale, and standing on the lawn pointed to the location of the future Federal City. General Forrest's granddaughters still own and live at Rosedale.

Mrs. General Forrest's only sister married Philip Barton Key, who built and resided at Woodley. Mr. Key was a violent Tory, and going to England, received a commission in the British Army. He was sent with a small command to Florida. He resigned after the war and returning the Woodley, became a prominent lawyer. He was an uncle of Francis Scott Key. General Forrest after the war went into the commission business with Benjamin Stoddert, Secretary of the Navy during Washington's administration. Richard Forrest was employed by them to go to England to look after the business there, but he had no sooner landed than he received word that the commission business had proved a total failure, and he was to return home. General Forrest died at Rosedale in 1805.

Richard Forrest moved to Washington in 1800. He owned and occupied a double, brick house near the southeast corner of F and Fourteenth Streets, the garden extending to the corner and in the rear nearly to Pennsylvania Avenue. It is now covered by the Ebbitt House. There my mother was born in 1807. It is a coincidence that the homesteads of both my parents should be owned to-day by the Messrs. Willard.

In 1801 Richard Forrest was one of the eight clerks appointed by Mr. Jefferson in the Department of State, which position he held until his death in 1828. The desk which he alone used for so many years was sent by the Secretary of State to Mrs. Forrest, and is now in the possession of the writer.

Mrs. Forrest's sister had married George Walker, one of the original proprietors of the Federal City. He was a Scotchman and first settled in Philadelphia. He would to-day be termed a merchant prince, having unlimited means at his command. He moved to Washington about 1793, and in 1794, when forty years of age, he married Martha Craufurd, of Upper Marlboro', Md., just eighteen years old. Being a man of wealth, he built a handsome residence in what was then known as Carrollsburg, and surrounded his young wife with every luxury that wealth and affection could bestow. Mrs. Walker only lived two years. Her remains, with those of her twin children, were taken to her old home, and to-day in the old family burial ground in Upper Marlboro' can be seen the marble shaft erected to her memory by her sorrowing husband.

George Walker became involved in a long and bitter war with the Commissioners of the new city. He had purchased from William Bailey 400 acres of land called the "Hop Yard," lying on the west side of the Eastern Branch, also a large tract of land from the Youngs, be-

lieving, as every one else did at that time, that the city and its public buildings and grounds would be located *east* of the Capitol. Many letters of George Walker's, written to the Commissioners, testify his opinion of them as being anything but honest men. He was particularly angered at the treatment he had received in regard to square 1065; he accused the Commissioners of giving General U. Forrest a deed for a lot to which they knew the public had no title. Finally seeing his hopes vanished, his affections blasted, his ambition disappointed, he returned to his native land, where he died some years afterwards. On his return to Scotland he had made from his own and his wife's hair various unique articles of jewelry, which he sent to Mrs. Richard Forrest, and they are now in the possession of the writer.

The Department of State was then on Fifteenth Street, and faced what is now G Street. There were no buildings of any description on the square bounded by F and G Streets and Fourteenth and Fifteenth Streets. Three o'clock was the usual dinner hour for every one; and my mother has often told me that about that hour they would look out of the front door on F Street and see her father coming across the lot; dinner would be served on his arrival.

Society in those days was very limited; everybody *who was anybody* knew each other. The Forrests' neighbors and friends were John Quincy Adams and his son, John Adams, who married his cousin, Mary Hellon; Mr. and Mrs. Madison and her son, Payne Todd; Dr. William Thornton and his mother-in-law, Mrs. Berdeau; General and Mrs. Walter Jones, with their large and interesting family of ten daughters, one of whom married Dr. Thomas Miller; Mr. and Mrs. William Ramsay, the grandparents of the present Ad-

miral Frank Ramsay; Hon. Richard Cutts, whose residence occupied the entire square bounded by Madison Place and H Street, now the Cosmos Club; it had been purchased by Mrs. Madison and there she died in 1849; Joseph Forrest, a brother of Richard, whose home was at the corner of Twentieth and F Streets; Mr. and Mrs. Peter Hagner's family, whose descendants still own the old homestead on H Street and whose garden embraced half of the square. Mr. Hagner was likened to the patriarch Job, with his seven sons and three daughters; Mr. and Mrs. Pleasonton; Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Monroe, whose son was Columbus Monroe, and whose daughter married Mr. Henry Randall; the Johnsons in the "six buildings"—the family of Mrs. John Quincy Adams—three of her married sisters also lived here, Mrs. Hellon, Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Fry. The Tayloes at the Octagon; General VanNess at Mansion Square; the Carrolls at Duddington. I should not close this list without mentioning some of the foreigners who took an active part in the sociabilities of Washington. The two succeeding British ministers, Mr. and Mrs. Merry and Lord and Lady Bagot; the latter was the niece of the Duke of Wellington. Madame DeNouvelle, the wife of the French Minister, Mr. Dashoff, Count DeMenou, and Mr. Poinsett. I have been told that Mr. Poinsett introduced the red flower to America used so much for decorating at Christmas time, called Poinsetta. Mr. Antrobus, Mr. Passmore and many others.

The principal amusement for the ladies was very much as it is now, card playing. They would meet at each other's houses nightly, perhaps *daily* and have a friendly game of whist.

General VanNess first lived on Eleventh street, between C and D. I believe the house is still standing. It was here the first notable wedding in his family took

place, that of Miss Rebecca Burns, Mrs. VanNess' cousin, to a Mr. Ratcliff, of New York. Her bridesmaids were Miss Ann VanNess, Miss Burroughs, the daughter of the first Commandant of the Marine Corps, who later married Hon. John Nelson, the Attorney General of the United States, and Miss Forrest, the daughter of Richard Forrest. It was in this house that General VanNess' only child, Ann Elbertina, was born. In 1820 General VanNess moved into his new residence called Mansion Square, David Burns' farm house being on the same grounds. In 1821 Ann Elbertina married Arthur Middleton of South Carolina. His grandfather was a signer of the Declaration of Independence. He was Secretary of Legation at Madrid when Cornelius P. VanNess, an uncle of his wife's, was United States Minister to Spain. Few weddings of the present day equal and none surpass the elegance and munificence of that occasion; there were six bridesmaids and grooms-men. The former were Miss Casinove, who married General Archibald Henderson, Commandant of the Marine Corps; Miss Frances P. Lewis, a daughter of Lawrence Lewis (Washington's nephew), who married General Butler, U. S. A.; Miss Laura Wirt, daughter of William Wirt, who married Thomas Randall, Esq.; Miss Mason, who married her cousin, George Mason of Gunston; Miss Lee, who married Dr. Bailey Washington of the U. S. N., and Miss Mary Ann Kerr, a niece of Mrs. Peter Hagner. The festivities lasted nearly a month; each bridesmaid gave a party; each groomsman, a dinner.

In 1825 quite a sensation was caused in the fashionable and religious circles of Washington by the voluntary withdrawal from the Georgetown Convent of its Mother Superior, known as "Sister Gertrude," otherwise Miss Ann Wight. She was a cousin of Mrs. Van-

Ness, being a niece of Mrs. David Burns, who was a Miss Ann Wight of Charles Co., Md. Miss Wight repaired to General VanNess' house, which was ever afterwards her home, and General VanNess, in his will, bequeathed her a handsome fortune. I presume there are others present besides myself who recollect Miss Wight perfectly. She was a most charming person in her manners and conversation, and was sought as an honored guest on all distinguished occasions. I think she died in the sixties.

After my father, Dr. John A. Kearney's death, my mother purchased and resided in the house at the southwest corner of Eighteenth and G Streets. This house was built about 1800 by a Dr. Ellzey, a prominent physician of his day. Dr. and Mrs. Ellzey having no children, rented a portion of the house to Salmon P. Chase (afterwards Chief Justice of the United States) when a young man for a school; and there he taught the classics to many of the youths of that day—1829. I heard the late Mr. James Colgate say he was a pupil of Mr. Chase's, and it was at that house that he was awarded a gold medal for proficiency in Greek by Mr. Chase, who remarked to him that he recited the Fifth Ode of Horace "like a young Roman rake." The medal is now owned by Mr. Colgate's son.

The fashionable school for young ladies about that period, 1820, was conducted by Mrs. Cecelia Sheddon, an accomplished Irish lady, who came here with her four young daughters, one of whom, Janet, married Mr. George W. Riggs. Mrs. Sheddon was not only a thorough teacher of the English branches, but a proficient French scholar, which her French spelling-book will amply testify. This book was highly recommended by the President of Georgetown College, and was in use there. I doubt if any succeeding work of the kind was

as successful in its efforts as that one. I still have my mother's thumb-worn copy. Mrs. Sheddon was succeeded by the Misses Cottringer, one of whom married Mr. Robert Brent, many of whose descendants still live in this city. St. John's Episcopal Church, built in 1816, was attended by all members of that denomination living west of the Capitol and east of Georgetown. Its first rector was Mr. Wilmer, who was succeeded by the Rev. Mr. Hawley. The latter wore the dress of that day, knee breeches and a queue; and though the fashions changed before his death in 1845, he made no change in the style of his clothes.